



2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

10:00 AM

Virtual

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE/AGENDA

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority does hereby certify that it is unable to hold a commission meeting under regular quorum requirements due to COVID-19. The next Commission meeting will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, May 24, 2022 at 10:00 am in accordance with the provisions of La R.S. 42:17.1(A)(2)(a)-(c). All efforts will be made to provide for observation and input by members of the public.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Commissioner Daniels, Commissioner Bryan, Commissioner Coulon, Commissioner Ewell, Commissioner Neal, Commissioner Raymond, Commissioner Walton

3. Consideration of Meeting Minutes

approved

[Board Meeting Minutes - April 26, 2022]

[22-084](#)

Commissioner Raymond moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to approve the minutes of April 26, 2022. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. RTA Chairman's Report

A. Swearing in of Jefferson Parish Commissioners

Judge Kern Reese swore in the new two Commissioners from Jefferson Parish Commissioner Timothy Coulon and Commissioner Joseph Ewell to the Regional Transit Authority Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Coulon stated that he has 50 years in public service and was the

Jefferson Parish President and also served as the Chairman on the Superdome Commission and he has always wanted to give back to the community.

Commissioner Ewell stated that he has been living in New Orleans for 40 Years. He was originally from Opelousas and he is a retired Health Care Executive and currently he serves as Marketing Manager for Humana. He was past Chairman of the Jefferson Community Foundation Jefferson Parish Workforce, past Chairman of the Southeast Louisiana Black Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of the Jefferson Community Health Care Center and most recently he served as Chairman of the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission.

Commissioner Ewell stated that his goal was to keep the region in the Regional Transit Authority and continue the collaboration between Jefferson and Orleans.

B. Assignment of Committees

Commissioner Daniels appointed both Commissioner Ewell and Commissioner Coulon to the Finance Committee and Commissioner Coulon to the Operations Committee.

5. Reports

A. Operations & Administration Committee Chairman's Report

Commissioner Neal congratulated the new Jefferson Parish Board Members and RTA's staff was working on the New Links Project which was a regional project that would be implemented in Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

Commissioner Neal stated that next month staff should have all the routes that was going to be implemented into the New Links Project. The New Links Project was going to begin in late September and hopeful staff will be able to hold one more public meeting before implementation.

Commissioner Neal stated that the BRT was another regional project and Commissioner Neal recommends that staff and the Board should take a visit to another peer transit property that was currently running a BRT project .

Commissioner Neal stated that the Strategic Mobility Plan needs to be updated and include Capital Projects and Regional Opportunities and the Strategic Mobility Committee Meetings need to restart.

B. Finance Committee Chairman's Report

Commissioner Raymond stated that he was excited to work with the new Commissioners from Jefferson Parish and he did participate in the 14th Annual Hurricane Preparedness Meeting where all Community Leaders talked about Hurricane Preparedness.

C. Jefferson Parish Report

Commissioner Coulon stated that at the Jefferson Parish Council Meeting they will approve Marie Defranchese to the Board of the Regional Transit Authority. The Council will also advertise for a New Transit Facility on David Drive.

D. RTA General Counsel's Report

Sundiata Haley stated that he will discuss his report in Executive Session.

E. RTA Chief Executive Officer's Report

Alex Wiggins reported that the RTA was about to launch the micro transit project which operates like Uber and Lyft where the passengers submit their own trip and are in control of their schedule. The software that is being used for this project was very similar to the software that the ride sharing platforms use. The program was originally going to launch in June and staff was slightly behind and was looking to launch in early July. This was a much more affordable way to meet the demands of the riders.

Alex Wiggins reported that the RTA was going to partner with Jefferson Parish to have a coordinated Paratransit Operation and the RFP's for this project will be advertised very soon.

Alex Wiggins reported that 8 employees has tested positive for COVID and on the Operators side the last two weeks there has been an up-tick of Operators calling out sick for a variety of different reasons and not all cases has been confirmed to have COVID and the routes were covered by the Extra Board.

Alex Wiggins reported on the Women in Transportation Conference and Site Visits

4 Staff attended the International Women in Transportation Conference

RTA Staff also participated in separate site visits

King County Metro charging station

Pike Place Market

Northgate TOD Project

King Street Station/Union Station

Alex Wiggins reported that June 5-8 2022 staff was attending the Rail Conference in San Diego, CA to attend the APTA Rail Conference and while in California staff will visit different Hydrogen Operation Transit Agencies that run Hydrogen Buses.

Alex Wiggins reported that regarding Hurricane Preparation:

The RTA will maintain service across all transit modes as long as weather conditions allow us to do so safely. In the event of a CAE, the RTA will....

Transport evacuees and their pets (those in small and extra-small carriers) from pickup locations to the Smoothie King Center (SKC). Pet buses also be provided for evacuees with large pets. Muzzles and leashes are a must.

Provide paratransit support for transport of home-bound citizens from their residences to the SKC.

Provide supplemental transport of hotel visitors from the hotel staging centers to MSY, if required.

Operate a limited number of regular bus routes, as resources permit.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Alex Wiggins reported that the RTA was a part of the City of New Orleans Hurricane Plan.

Commissioner Neal stated that he was glad to know that the Move Project was starting soon.

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Alex Wiggins reported that the RTA was going to work with Jefferson Parish Transit to make both systems totally accessible.

F. Chief of Staff Legislative Update

Katherine Felton reported on the following:

Bus and Bus Facility Grant - Applying for \$10 Million for 23 buses

\$5M appropriations request submitted to U.S. Representative Carter

Staff will be participating in New Orleans Day at the State Capital

G. Operations Update

Gerard Guter reported that there are 3 picks during the year to allow the operators to adjust their schedules.

Gerard Guter reported that the total Ridership for the month of March 2022 was 811K. On-Time Performance for bus and streetcar was 76%.

Gerard Guter reported that Route 45-Lakeview had the highest On-Time Performance with 92% and the route with the lowest On-Time Performance was Route 5 Marigny Bywater with 68%.

Gerard Guter reported that 18 of the 34 service routes were affected by Temporary Detours which was 52.9% of the routes and 6 of the 34 service routes were affected by Long Term Detours which was 17.6% of the routes.

Gerard Guter reported that for the month of March RTA delivered 96% of Bus Service and 95% of Streetcar Service.

Gerard Guter reported that Boarding Per Revenue Hour for bus during the month of March 11.6, streetcar was 30 and Paratransit was 1.91.

Gerard Guter reported that accidents for the month of March were not good.

In response to Commissioner Raymond, Gerard Guter reported that the rest of the new Paratransit Buses should be in the next couple of weeks.

H. RTA Chief Financial Officer's Report

Gizelle Banks reported that Ridership - As COVID wanes, ridership gradually recovers while service levels remain steady. However, the number of public transit trips taken by riders in March 2022 (826K) shows a slight increase of (215K) from the previous month of February 2022. Actual ridership when compared to the budget shows a positive variance of over 3% for the month of March.

Gizelle Banks reported that Farebox Recovery Rates - 2022 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - Fare revenue continues to offset a slightly lower percentage of operating expenses as ridership struggles to rebound. However, March's farebox recovery increased from 8.67% in the prior month to 12.6%.

Gizelle Banks reported that - FERRY- Farebox Recovery Rates 2022 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - The increase in farebox recovery to 12.6% in March from 8.67% in February is a result of increase in passenger revenue and a slight increase in operating expenses from the prior month.

Gizelle Banks reported that - Operating Revenues (Budget, Actual & Prior Year) - Overall, Operating Revenues display positive results for the month when compared to the prior year due to strong Sales Tax Revenues. Passenger Fares for March, fared favorably by \$325K or 48%.

Gizelle Banks reported that - Net Revenue (Before and After Government Assistance) Net Revenue (Before Government Assistance) is \$1.6M for the month of March. After applying the month's \$1.2M in Government Operating Assistance, Net Revenue ended with a \$1.1M positive variance for the month of March (when compared to the budget).

Gizelle Banks reported that Operating Expenses - Labor and Fringe Benefits, the largest expenditure at \$5.3M, comprised 67% of this month's actual expenses. In total, Operating Expenses for the month shows a negative variance of \$1.2M when compared to the budget.

Gizelle Banks reported that regarding - Operating Reserve -The strong positive variance from Net Revenue \$1.8M (After Government Assistance) was offset by \$462K in Debt Service, resulting in \$1.4M in Restricted Operating/Capital Reserve.

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Gizelle Banks reported that during French Festival the farebox on the Ferry and the buses and streetcar will be more during the festival session.

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Gizelle Banks reported that during 2020 the revenue went down by 60% and during 2021 we have never got past the 50%

increase.

Alex Wiggins reported that the RTA incentive riders to make the riders come back to the system. The RTA will be launching a new mobile platform that will make it easier for the passenger to pay.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Gizelle Banks reported that the RTA receives the General Use Sales Tax, State Motor Vehicle and Hotel/Motel Funds.

Commissioner Daniels stated that there has been a lot of work with staff to strategize how to use this funding wisely.

I. DBE Report

Adonis Expose' reported that the RTA awarded a total of \$7,289,690 in contracts and \$5,731,500 was awarded to DBE Prime Contractors. The DBE participation was 79%.

Current DBE Projects:

CMAR - Canal Street Ferry Terminal (Construction) - 5%

Security Services - 15%

Disaster Recovery Grants Management and Administration - 33%

Riverfront Track Work & Overhead Catenary - 10%

Transit Ferry Services - 9%

East New Orleans Maintenance Building - 14%

St. Charles Streetcar Line Downtown Loop Pavement Replacement - 67%

OCS Pole Replacement - 0%

Business Intelligence & Data Management Reporting System - 0%

On Call Technical Support - 0%

Napoleon Facility Renovation & Upgrade - 0%

Current SBE Projects:

DBE Consulting Services - 46%

Construction Cost Audits - 49%

Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study - 16%

On Call A&E Services for Design of Interim Downtown Transit Hub - 0%

Vegetation Control on Streetcar Lines - 0%

Facility Maintenance & Construction Support Services - 0%

Classification and Compensation Study - 0%

Leadership & Change Management Training - 0%

Temporary Janitorial Services 0%

Upcoming DBE/SBE Projects:

Transit Security Services - 23%

Contractors for Rampart Streetcar Line: Emergency Repair Project - 13.8%

Transit Stop On-Call & Support Services - 28.33%

Adonis Expose' reported that the DBE/SBE Outreach Event was going to be held on today at the Ernest Morial Convention Center.

6. La DOTD Report - Mr. Kevin Lawson

Kevin Lawson, DOTD reported that the Triennial Safety Audit of the RTA took place last year in 2021 and there were no major issues regarding the Audit.

Kevin Lawson reported that Mike Smith was a great person to work with and doing a great job with the RTA.

Kevin Lawson reported that all three of the derailments were human factor violations and all have been resolved as far as updating the trainers or training the operators and regarding the other seven collisions only one was due to operating or rule violations of human factor.

Kevin Lawson reported that due to Federal Regulations the RTA has to update the Agency Safety Plan Annually and that was given to DOTD in December of 2021.

7. Procurement Items

A. Authorizations

Rail Maintenance Vehicle Purchase

[22-027](#)

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Raymond seconded to adopt the Rail Maintenance Vehicle Purchase. Resolution No. 22-035 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 22-035

RTA Mentor Protégé Program

[22-034](#)

Commissioner Bryan moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the RTA Mentor Prote'ge' Program. Resolution No. 22-036 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 22-036

Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) Between Audubon Nature Institute (ANI) and RTA

[22-064](#)

In response to Commissioner Walton, Lona Hankins reported that RTA will oversee this project and the Audubon Nature Institute will pay the RTA's Contractors.

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Ewell seconded to adopt the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) Between Audubon Nature Institute (ANI) and RTA. Resolution No. 22-038 was approved unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 22-037

RTA Work Policies Amended

[22-075](#)

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt the RTA Work Policies. Resolution No. 22-038 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 22-038

Transit Security Services

[22-076](#)

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Robert Hickman reported that this contract was for the Security Company that will secure the facilities.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Robert Hickman reported that this company will provide security at Duncan Plaza and the RTA Facilities.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Alex Wiggins reported that this contract was a Not To Exceed contract.

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Ewell seconded to adopt the Transit Security Services. Resolution No. 22-039 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 22-039

Oracle Cloud ERP

[22-079](#)

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt Oracle Cloud ERP. Resolution 22-040 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 22-040

B. Renewal of Various RTA Insurance Coverages 2022-23

adopted

Various Insurance Coverages

[22-083](#)

In response to Commissioner Walton, Mark Major reported that there was a 22% premium increase that was directly associated with the Hard Rock Collapse and this increase will be discussed with Legal Counsel to see what the RTA can recoup from this increase.

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the Renewal of Various RTA Insurance Coverages 2022-23. Resolution

No. 22-042 was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 22-042

8. New Business (UNANIMOUS VOTE REQUIRED TO CONSIDER)

None.

9. Audience Questions and Comments

PLEASE NOTE: Those desiring to make public comments should either enter their complete name in the Zoom meeting's chat box to make comments during the meeting, or send their comments to rtaboard@rtaforward.org to have them read aloud.

In response to Sylvia, Yolanda Rodriguez stated that Sylvia should check out the APTA website regarding information for the APTA Rail Conference.

Jim Goodwin sent the Board an Email that Yolanda Rodriguez read into the record. The email addressed the speeding buses in his neighborhood and his organization would like to place brochures on the ferries.

Alex Wiggins reported that staff was going to take a closer look at the speeding buses and his organization would have to work with the Communications/Marketing Team to come up with a system that works for everyone to place paraphernalia on the ferries.

Bernard Gordon did not leave any information.

Valerie Jefferson asked the following questions:

Are the RTA's employees private or public?

Are the RTA's employees Civil Service and/or First Responders?

Can Gizelle Banks give an update on the money that the RTA received from the Federal Government such as the American Rescued Money and the Infrastructure Money?

Can Gizelle Banks give a report on the TMSEL Pension Plan. The RTA owns the plan \$112 Million?

What is the status of the PPE's for the Operators and the riding public?

Commissioner Raymond recommended that Yolanda Rodriguez get the answers to Valerie Jefferson questions and present them offline.

10. Executive Session (2/3RDS VOTE TO Consider)

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to approve to go into Executive session on

RTA v. Riverwalk Marketplace, et al

ATU Update

The motion was adopted unanimously.

Commissioner Raymond moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to come out of Executive Session. The motion was adopted unanimously.

approved

RTA v. Riverwalk Marketplace, et al

ATU Update

11. Adjournment

Commissioner Raymond moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adjourn the Board Meeting of May 24, 2022. The motion was adopted unanimously,

adjourned